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#### WILLIAM WAS NO LAWYER.

The question whether William Shakespeare, or the person who "wrote Shakespeare," had an intimate acquaintance with the law of his time has been learnedly and unlearnedly discussed ever since the late Lord Campbell raised the question in a book on the subject. It has entered more or less into the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, there being no question of the legal attainments of Lord Bacon, and the legal knowledge supposed to be displayed in the plays attributed to Shakespeare being regarded by the Baconites as conclusive proof that the "poor player" did not write them.

At the annual meeting of the Vermont Bar Association on Tuesday the attention of that state bar was directed to the question of Shakespeare's knowledge of the law. The subject was gone into with great thoroughness and the conclusion reached by the president of the association was that what the writer of Shakespeare's plays did not know about law would fill a volume, while what he did know correctly could be put in a paragraph. The dramatist had heard some law terms during the discussion of his father's affairs in court, for the elder Shakespeare, was at the wrong end of several cases in which money was involved. take the same then it may be sold at He had also picked up a few phrases from lawyers who hobnobbed with the London players, and several words now exclusively used by lawyers were in the common language of the people of Shakespeare's

The curious thing about Shakespeare's use of law terms, according to the Vermont decision, is that they are nearly always misuses. "His misuse of legal terms was frequent and flagrant." For instance, President Senter asserted that in the seventeen cases of the use of the word "dower" only one was correct. So also his use of "indenture" and the section providing that in case the "moiety," of "distrained" and "testament," was wrong and his use of land embraced in the abandoned high-"action on the case" in "The Comedy of Errors" was altogether wrong, since this action, in the sense there indicated, was not known in England till nine years after the play was written. The description of the trial of the Duke of Buckingham, given in "Henry VIII.," was admitted to show a familiarity with legal procedure and techincal terms, but any argument that might be founded on that is destroyed by the fact that the legal phraseology is taken almost literally from Hall's Chronicles. If anyone's legal standing is affirmed by that passage, it is Hall's, not Shakespeare's. Most of the legal phraseology in the historical plays comes from the Chronicles of Hall or Holinshed, said President Senter, that the legislature had some purpose and he cited other parallel passages in proof. Almost without ex- in inserting the words. The position ception, in these plays, the technical legal terms were taken from these

As for the famous trial scene in the "Merchant of Venice," it was offer and to limit the abutters who shown by a thorough analysis of the case that a more flagrant illustration of ignorance of the law of Shakespeare's own time could hardly have been presented. The proceedings had no foundation in common law, given the right by this statute to destatute law, or moral law. The man who wrote that scene not only had no legal training, but described proceedings that could not possibly have occurred in any court of law.

William Shakespeare may consider himself disbarred,-Cleveland

Not her weapon: "Is your wife a club woman, Mike?" "Narry the likes o' that, sor; she uses a flatiron, sor."-Detroit Free Press.

## THREE OPINIONS REACH THE SAME CONCLUSION

barreled decision of the Supreme Court, not to be an abutter on a certain strip of land that was abandoned. as part of Fort street, and therefore not entitled to compel the Government, under the statute for such a case provided, to give him the first offer of the land before selling it to another.

All three Justices have their individdeciding issues.\ Henry Smith brought a but in equity seeking the carcollation of a deed executed by Governor S. tained an area of 1930 square feet, troversy." Cent. Dict. \* \* \* Tre Circuit Judge found for the com-Dole appealed. The case was submit-Bigelow for Mrs. Rose. Justice Galwhich concludes thus:

"The bill should have been dismissed for want of equity. The decree appealed fr m is reversed and the cause remanded to the Circuit Judge with direction to dismiss the bill and for such other further proceedings as may be

#### THE STATUTE.

Section 354, Civil Laws, upon which the complainant based his claim, reads

"All lands and real property taken for jured. highways or improvements under this Act shall belong to the Hawaiian Government absolutely and in fee simple, and in case a highway or improvement shall at any time be vacated, closed, abandoned and discontinued, the land of such highway or improvements shall be used for the purposes of the Government; provided that in case the same shall be in any way disposed of by the Government, it shall be first offered to the abutters in compromise, for a reasonable length of time and at a reasonable price, and if they do not

Following are some of the reasons given by the Justices for the conclusions in which they concur:

BY JUSTICE GALBRAITH. Under the issues presented there is out one difficulty in deciding this case, namely, to determine the proper construction to be placed on that part of way shall be sold by the Territory "it shall be first offered to the abutters in etc. If the phrase "in compromise were eliminated the difficulty would The construction adopted by the 'ircuit Judge treats the phrase "in ompromise" as meaningless and the section as meaning exactly what it would if those words had been omitted. We cannot approve of this conto express the purposes of making the abandoned or vacated street were not sold, it was only such abutters as might be injured by the vacation of the highages against the Territory and whose claim for such damages might be set- divide the land and offer each part to tled or compromised by such offer and the abutter on that part. That would a sale in pursuance thereof: To the be the fair way and evidently the way abutter who was not damaged it would 'called for by the spirit of the statute. 'Chief Justice Frear yesterday,

Henry Smith is declared, in a three- be impossible to make an offer "in compromise." He would have nothing to compromise with the territory for the reason that he is not injured by its

This interpretation does not mean that the land shall be offered to the injured abutter at a reasonable price in exchange or settlement of a claim for damages that he may have on account of the vacation of a street or that the amount of such claim for damages shall be estimated by the Superintendent of Public Works and credited on ual opinions recorded, but agree on the the price of the land. This of course would be within one meaning of the quite all of it is in front of her lot, word "compromise" but the word in this statute is undoubtedly used in another sense, namely, as "an agree-B. Dole conveying to Mary A. S. Rose ment or compact adopted as a means a triangular piece of land which con- of superseding an undetermined con-

doned highway, one has the same free as "Old lane," which ran between two plainant and decreed the cancelling of and convenient access to his premises the deed. Mrs. Rose and Governor after as before the vacation while the conveyed to him, and, that, too, though access of the other to his premises is entirely cut off. No offer in compromted April 22 last and decided Novem- ise could be made to the first for the ber 16. . E. C. Peters appeared for reason that he has sustained no injury complainant; J. W. Cathcart for the, and has nothing to compromise with Governor, and Kinney, McClanahan & the Territory but between the latter and the Territory there exists "an undetermined controversy" on account of braith writes the leading opinion, his property taken and his right destroyed by the abandonment of the street. The latter is the abutter to sion than that made has been sugwhom the land must be offered before gested to the court, and it is not clear sale and the former although an abutter is not within the terms of the statute and has no right under it.

> The abutter whose access to the highway is cut off by the vacation of the street if the abandoned land goes to a stranger will be injured if not permitted to buy the abandoned portion while if the offer is made to him at a reasonable price for a reasonable time and he purchases he would not be in-

> The evidence shows that the respondent, Rose, was an abutter on the abandoned street; that the land conveyed was between her premises and the highway, Fort street, and that her only outlet to the highway was over this land; that the complainant was an abutter to a small part of the land but that none of it lay between his premises and Fort street and that his access to Fort street was as free and convenient after as before the abandonment; that while it would doubtless have been to Smith's advantage to own the abandoned street in order to enable him to exchange it with Mrs. Rose for another tract of her land which he desired still he was not deprived of any property right by the abandonment of the street or denied any right given him by law by the failure of the Superintendent of Public Works to offer him the land "in compromise."

By the offer in compromise to Mrs. Rose and her acceptance she obtained an outlet to the highway and her claim for damages that would have accrued had the land been sold to complainant | concludes: or any other person was "superseded."

#### BY CHIEF JUSTICE FREAR.

·I concur in the foregoing conclusion, but express no opinion as to the significance of the words "in compromise" in the statute, except that the construction of those words contended for by the plaintiff, to the effect that they require the entire land (e. g., a long street that is closed) to be offered as a whole to all the abutters to be divided among themselves in compromise with each other, clearly cannot be sustained. That construction would violate both the language and the spirit of the sec tion and be unreasonable and impracticable. The words "in compromise" in this section are to say the least used somewhat loosely and their meaning is very obscure.

The Chief Justice reasons that the aw requires the land to be offered several, as it would be unfair to offer the whole to one of them, adding;

The only alternative would be to

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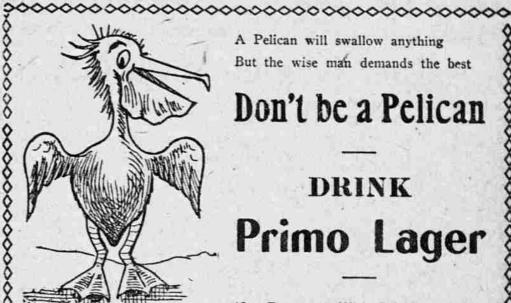
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culty in doing this with fairness. But, as in this instance, the circumstances might be such as to render it difficult to what extent. It is clear that Mrs. Rose was at least the principal abutter on the land in question. Nearly if not while only a short stretch of a side of Mr. Smith's lot borders on it and that not immediately, for a narrow strip along his lot was withheld from Mrs. Rose, perhaps accidentally, and afterwards offered to Mr. Smith. A conpieces of Mr. Smith's land, has all been Mrs. Rose's lot for a short distance on one side, bordered on that in much the same way that Mr. Smith's borders on this. The whole transaction cannot be set aside merely because the Superintendent of Public Works may not have divided the land exactly as the court would. Some room must be left for the exercise of discretion in the execution of the details. No better mode of divithat there is any better or fairer.

#### BY JUSTICE PERRY.

In my opinion the offer contemplated in Section 354 is to be made to all of the abutters whoever the class so designated may include, that is to say, to each of the abutters the portion on which his land abuts. The words "in compromise" do not, as I think, limit the class of abutters to whom the offer s to be made, but are to be read and understood as though inserted immediately after the word offered, i. e., they were intended to show the nature or the object of the offer and not to describe the permitted purchasers at private sale. \* \*

Justice Perry holds the words "at a reasonable price" to have their ordi-'compromise" means

If it be asked why the words "in compromise" were inserted, I suggest that the most plausible theory is that what the legislature had in mind was a satisfaction of claims, founded on justice if not on law, that abutters might make to the effect that such abutters should be given the first onportunity to acquire the abandoned strip. \* \* \*

Arguing, similarly to his colleagues for the superior right of Mrs. Rose under the statute, Justice Perry thus

If, on the other hand, the strip, a seems to be shown by some of the evidence, was a part originally, not of Fort street, but of what was known as Old Lane which continued northerly across the land of the complainant, then even more clearly was Mrs. Rose the only abutter upon this strip. She should be offered the portion running across her land or upon which her land fronts and likewise the complainant should be offered the portion running across his land. The latter portion has been conveyed or offered to the complainant; he alone is an abutter as to that.

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It is not known yet whether Hawiii will be named as a separate lighthouse district or attached to California, in which case the officer stationed here would be an assistant inspector. Captain Rodman will be the probable choice for inspector of Hawaii, in which case a lighthouse tender may be provided for his use. It is understood that Captain Rodman has been endorsed for the position.

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